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## SPIRITUALITY IN BUSINESS

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Many articles have been written on spirituality in business. I would like to share my views on this subject by describing how we work together at The Monroe Institute and Monroe Products.

When we think about how much time we spend with our fellow employees, we realize that a forty-hour workweek is approximately 50 percent of our waking hours. It is conceivable that we spend more time with our coworkers than with our families. It may not be the same "quality" of time, but nevertheless, in many cases it is the majority of our time. If this is true for you, how do you spend your time at work? Are you different at work than you are at home with family and loved ones? How are you "Being" with your coworkers and family and friends?

Spirituality as defined in the dictionary is "of the spirit or the soul as distinguished from the body or material matters" and "of, from, or concerned with the intellect, intellectual, consisting of spirit, not corporeal." The mere definition implies that we are "more than our physical bodies." So what is the "more than" and how do we open to that spiritual part of ourselves? More importantly, how do we live spiritually in our everyday lives, especially in the workplace?

The key is to look within ourselves for the awareness and the experience of spirit. Many methods facilitate such openings, and certainly the programs at The Monroe Institute offer one approach. Whatever method you choose, it is important to continually grow and learn more about "who" you really are. When we connect with the spirit within, we give meaning to the physical world and understand our place within it.

We can look within by listening to ourselves in others. People can hold up mirrors to us if we are willing to listen to them without judgment or emotion. By being truly open to "spirit" that speaks through others, I have learned the most about myself. There is always a subtle message for us if we are only open to hearing it.

Communication is another way to connect with spirit. Just as it is important to listen, it is also important to communicate without being protecting, controlling, or defending. The best communication comes from our core self, not from what we think we should say. There is a tendency to make our point of view the truth. In reality, each person's truth is unique. Many times we feel like our description of events in our lives is the absolute

truth; however, what is true for you is not necessarily true for others. Transformation occurs with the realization that another's point of view can be as valid as your own. Acceptance does not mean agreement. It is simply an expression of respect.

Do you like your job? Are you doing what you want to be doing? Are you happy? We may not like many parts of our jobs, but those parts still have to be done. That's also true in many other things that we do. The key is passion. Are you living your passion? Do you share it? Do you let others know what you are passionate about and enroll them in participating in your passion?

My passion for animals is a good example. I am on the board of the Almost Home Pet Adoption Center, Nelson County SPCA, which is a no-kill adoption facility located just north of Lovingston on Route 29. I involve as many people as possible to assist in any way they can to advance the mission/vision of the center. I talk about what we do, invite people to come and see the new dogs and cats, encourage generosity in their contributions, and show appreciation for the many volunteers who assist Bette Grahame, the founder. The basis of my communication is through creation—to create an awareness of passion for animals.

I have an equal passion for the work we do at the Institute and for the “team” of wonderful people who make it work. My attention is on listening, which provides an opening to create a positive environment for transformation. We all work together through accepting, servicing, and acknowledging each other. We place a high value on working together as a team in total cooperation and harmony. The following is from our company doctrine:

“COOPERATION — We agree to support one another, to honor and to respect ourselves and each other. We agree to be accountable, to stay in integrity, and to hold the highest regard for each other.”

I strive to foster communication in the workplace. If we communicate consistently, insignificant issues will disappear. The communication must be honest and without emotion. It is not difficult to get along with others if we work to understand our own way of being. Remember that we are mirrors to each other and once we comprehend that, our spirituality will shine. Five values can enable all of us to create a world that works for everyone. The first is compassion. Be compassionate for others—look at what it is like for someone to be with you. Are you caring? Do you really listen to what others are saying?

Second, be just. Always be equitable and impartial with others. Don't assume your point of view is right. As I said before, there is no wrong or right. Their point of view is as valid as yours. Let go of your need to be right in a situation.

Third, live through sustainability. Participate in creating a sustainable environment. Be proactive in the workplace to enable the company to sustain itself. Offer new ideas that will help others perform to the best of their ability.

Fourth, take responsibility for your words and actions. Listen to what you are saying and how you are saying it. Be responsible for the outcome of your words and actions. Think before you speak and pause before you act. You can choose how you perceive a situation. Choose to be creative rather than reactive.

Fifth, be generous. Give of yourself and give up control. Giving is not just monetary, it is sharing yourself through listening and communicating and letting go of whatever holds you back from doing so. Spirit is giving something of value in return for that which is provided for you. Spirituality is generosity in action.

Take a moment to reflect upon the words you have just read. How do you feel? If you say to yourself, "I already knew that," that's great. If you say, "I will try this and see if it works," then you have opened the door for spirit to enter fully into your everyday life. Whatever you feel right now, the choice is yours to express yourself completely as a "spiritual being having a physical experience."

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